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Soviets Outspend U.S. In Arms Development

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The Soviet Union is spending significantly more on military research and development than the United States, U.S. intelligence agencies have told a congressional committee.

Soviet efforts to develop new weapons have been worrying some administration officials. Their secret intelligence reports show intensive work in several military fields in which research breakthroughs could give Moscow major military advantages over this country.

The CIA and the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency also told the committee of consumer unrest in the Soviet Union. Food shortages caused by last year's low harvest have caused some disorders and a lot of grumbling but have not threatened the Soviet leadership.

The CIA and DIA testimony made public yesterday by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress was given in hearings last May and June. It cited reports of food riots in two large cities, Rostov and Kiev.

GOVERNMENT EXPERTS said yesterday there have been further reports since June of such disturbances in other parts of the Soviet Union. The trouble has included fights over scarce food supplies.

The committee hearings were held as part of its annual inquiry into the allocation of resources in the Soviet Union and China.

Intelligence officials told the committee last year that China's military procurement had declined since 1971. But the new testimony showed an increase of Chinese arms supplies again in 1975, although the level did not reach the 1971 peak.

The increase measured in monetary terms was caused by more costly warplanes and some increase in warship production, the CIA said. Other sources said yesterday China has continued a fairly steady production of basic army weaponry throughout this period.

The high level of Soviet military research and development spending was described as part of a military budget that is greater than U.S. defense spending. The CIA issued a paper last May saying it long underestimated Soviet military spending.

When estimated in U.S. dollars, the Soviet expenditure for 1975 was about 42 percent higher than the U.S. defense authorization, according to current CIA estimates. If both budgets are estimated in rubles, the Soviet figure is about 29 percent higher.

THE NEW ESTIMATE raised the percentage of Soviet gross national product going into military purposes. The figure long used in U.S. calculations of Kremlin priorities was 6 or 8 percent, but this was changed to between 11 and 13 percent. The increase resulted from a better understanding of the Soviet economy and armed forces rather than from

any discovery of more Soviet troops and weapons than previously known.

When The Washington Star disclosed last February that the old estimates were being revised sharply upward, Sen. William Proxmire, chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, said this simply proved the Soviet military machine was more inefficient than previously thought. The Wisconsin Democrat contended that it did not prove that the Soviet Union presented a greater military threat to the United States by giving its armed forces a higher priority in a badly strained economy than had been realized here.

In a closed hearing on June 15, Proxmire pursued this line with Lt. Gen. Samuel V. Wilson, the director of DIA. "We don't know how much of the increase is inefficiency, maybe none of it," but conceivably all of it is, Proxmire said.

Wilson replied he did not think the higher estimate "automatically means that they are more inefficient than we previously thought."

BOTH WILSON and CIA experts reported that the Soviet research development, test and evaluation (RDT&E) expenditure is greater than the U.S. level. This country budgeted \$9.5 billion for military RDT&E in the fiscal year that ended June 30.

One of Wilson's experts, economic analyst Norbert Michaud, estimated that the Soviet Union spends 20 or 30 percent more, although he and CIA analysts said this is difficult to calculate.

James Miller of the Pentagon's directorate of science and technology testified that the Soviets have strong RDT&E programs in new high-strength metals, in chemical, bacteriological and radioactive warfare capabilities, in both land-based and submarine missiles, in aircraft and in military uses of space.

Wilson said the various programs are "over a wider scale, broader scope, in more areas on the Soviet side than we presently are engaging in. It is significantly greater than ours." He added that private industry indirectly helped U.S. military research.

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